

WHAT REALLY MAKES A FILM FEMINIST?

A comparative analysis of Westernised films and Hong Kong cinema between 1990-2000



All About My Mother (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999)



Centre Stage (Stanley Kwan, 1991)



The Piano (Jane Campion, 1993)



Summer Snow (Ann Hui, 1995)

INTRODUCTION

This research is about differences of gender perspectives of directors of feminist films between Western countries and Hong Kong between 1990 and 2000. Four films will be studied in particular, including two Westernised films, *The Piano* and *All About My Mother*, and two Hong Kong films, *Summer Snow* and *Centre Stage*. This research will explore and examine the definition of 'feminist film' in the Western and the Hong Kong cultural context since the approaches to the concept of 'feminist film' hitherto have been problematic and inadequate. As contexts vary across regions of the world, it is also important to discuss the definition of 'feminist film' with reference to the particular cultural and social environment.

KEY FINDINGS (SO FAR)

Feminist films cannot be reduced to women's cinema. In terms of feminist filmmakers, it is crucial to make clear that there is no limitation on the gender categories they may fall into. A director who makes feminist films could be a male, a female or of any gender identity.

A film being feminist depends on the text and the ways it can be analysed or interpreted more than on the gender of the author. Women in feminist films normally posit themselves as the subject of acts of the narratives. They perhaps are not the subject of the story from the beginning to the end. Nevertheless, they definitely undergo change or changes—from being passive, sexless and unresponsive to being active, aggressive and independent.

EMERGING CONCLUSION

Feminist films are not only about women or addressed to women. Feminist films are for everybody.

For feminist films, cultural, ethnic, racial and gender diversity (and equality) are vital. Since people live in a postmodern world from the 1970s, a world with differences which are incommensurable. Thus, the concept of feminist films also needs to show an awareness of intersectionality, which is an approach to challenge the notion of not only gender hegemony but also ethnic or racial hegemony.

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